

figure of a \$950 million increase. The House would not go along. We compromised out at \$907 million. The next year we added \$1 billion; the year after, \$2 billion; the year after that, \$2.3 billion, which was cut a little on an across-the-board cut. This year we put in \$2.7 billion, now reduced to \$2.5 billion. But we have a total of almost \$9 billion added in these last five cycles and they have made tremendous strides on the most dreaded diseases—Parkinson's and Alzheimer's and cancer and heart ailments and the whole range.

It is my hope in the future that whoever chairs the subcommittee will have better cooperation on all sides to present the bill to the President before the fiscal year ends. I think, had that been done, we could have mustered a very strong position that our priorities were superior to what the President had in mind, and that if he were going to veto the bill, we ought not to be fearful of his veto but we ought to accept it as his view and then take the case to the American public. I think, had the bill been submitted to the President on September 5, we would have won that fight. Or if we had not won it outright, we would have compromised in terms so we wouldn't be here on December 15, still arguing about this Labor-HHS-Education bill as the principal source of contention.

(The remarks of Mr. SPECTER pertaining to the introduction of S. 3280 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I again thank my distinguished ranking member, Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER, who works collaboratively on veterans affairs matters and all members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. It is a committee which has worked in a bipartisan way. It has a very excellent staff, with staff director Bill Tuerk. I thank the staff for their assistance and commend to the public and the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the legislation which has been passed during the 106th Congress.

I know my time has expired, and I note the presence on the floor of a distinguished Senator, Ms. COLLINS. I yield the floor. I was about to say "another distinguished Senator," but I modified that to "a distinguished Senator."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, before the Senator from Pennsylvania leaves the floor, if that is his intention, I thank him for the exceptional job he has done in ensuring that we do have funding increases for critical programs such as those at the National Institutes of Health.

I heard the Senator from Pennsylvania, the chairman of the subcommittee, describe it as the crown jewel of the Federal Government, and I

totally agree with his comments. He has also been an advocate for more education funding, combined with more flexibility. I wish we had followed his advice earlier this year and sent the appropriations bill down to the White House, completing his work in a very timely fashion back in July, I believe it was.

I commend the Senator for being an outstanding chairman. I am a great admirer of his and appreciate all of his hard work.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I express my thanks to Senator COLLINS. We work very closely together with a very distinguished group of Senators—Senator JEFFORDS, Senator SNOWE, and who is the fifth member? Yes, Senator CHAFEE, who is presiding. I thank the Chair and thank Senator COLLINS.

#### EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 1:30 p.m., with the time equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE STEEP COST OF A MAINE WINTER

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the importance of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program known as LIHEAP in helping low-income Maine families cope with the high cost of our long Maine winters.

As Callie Parker from Little Deer Isle, Maine, so eloquently testified before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee earlier this year, heating your home during a Maine winter is a matter of life and death. When the cold reaches into the very marrow of one's bones, when a glass of water you left on a night stand freezes during the night should your furnace go out, you simply cannot get by without heat.

Unfortunately, not everyone has enough money to buy the fuel necessary to heat their home. Far too many Maine families have had to choose whether to buy groceries or to pay their rent or mortgage or to keep warm. These are choices that no one should be forced to make, but unless we increase funding for energy assistance now, these choices will become increasingly common.

Winter has not even officially begun, although you would not know that in the area of the country from which the Presiding Officer and I come. The high price of fuel and cold temperatures have already driven a record number of households in Maine to seek home heating assistance. Already the Community Action Program agencies in Maine have identified 28,000 households

in need of LIHEAP funds to get through this winter. That compares to only 10,000 applicants at this time last year; in other words, it has more than doubled the amount of households seeking this kind of assistance. Another 19,000 families are waiting to be reviewed by the CAP agencies.

The problem is, there is simply not sufficient money. As this chart shows, a Maine winter exacts a steep toll. Today, in Maine, a gallon of home heating oil, on average, costs \$1.56. Last year at this time, home heating oil in Maine went for \$1.03 a gallon—and we thought that was very high. That number is high because just two years ago the average price of home heating oil in Maine was just 78 cents a gallon. In short, home heating oil prices have increased by 100 percent in just two years. For the 75 percent of Mainers who rely on home heating oil to keep their homes warm, this is a steep price to pay indeed. Those heating their homes with natural gas also are facing difficulties. Consumer prices for natural gas have shot up over 50 percent compared to last year.

As the second column on this chart shows, last year Maine's CAP agencies distributed an average of \$488 to each household. That was the average LIHEAP benefit. Despite the rising costs of fuel, this year the Maine CAP agencies are able to distribute an average benefit of only \$350.

So you see the situation we have, Mr. President, and see why it is such a problem. We have the price of home heating oil far higher than last year, and more than double what it was two years ago. The high cost of fuel has put more strain on more families, and as a result many more households need assistance. That has caused the average LIHEAP benefit to be cut significantly.

What does this mean? When the price of oil is 50 percent higher than last year, and the LIHEAP benefit is \$138 less than last year, it means that people are not able to buy very many gallons of oil to heat their homes. Last year's LIHEAP benefit purchased 474 gallons of home heating oil. This year's benefit will purchase less than half that amount—a mere 224 gallons of oil.

So we have the worst of all situations. We have the price of home heating oil at record highs; we have the benefit amount having to be cut to less than last year's; and the result is that low-income families are able to purchase far less home heating oil.

And this year's winter is already shaping up to be colder than last year's. Mainers will need more oil to keep warm this winter, not less. When the furnace remains silent no matter how far you turn the thermostat dial, we need to be there to put oil in the tank.

The bottom line is we need to provide more assistance to more families.

The legislation before us today will provide an extra \$300 million in